

## Contributed

### CAUSE OF THE WAR.

By Rev. T. D. Wesley.

The real cause of the present war may be found in the modern false foundations of faith.

For a number of years there has been a tendency among materialistic scholars in Germany to interpret the plain facts of the Bible as monstrous fancies of the imagination, and this trend of thinking has spread its incubus throughout the scholastic Christian world.

A few years ago it was proposed to build a university in Hamburg without a theological seminary, because the authorities claimed that there was no need of a seminary since theological scholars had been teaching that the Bible is a myth.

While the higher learning of the present age has been reducing the realities of religion to ideas of the mind, the world has been sinking in materialism, commercialism and selfishness, and has yielded to the very temptations that Jesus overcame in the wilderness.

As soon as the infidels of Germany hung a black crepe upon the Bible, they paved the way to place black crepes upon their own doors, for attack upon the Bible is equivalent to an attack upon the life of the home, society and the nation.

This war is the inevitable result of being beguiled by Satan, who is opposed to God and His will.

Unthinking people have blamed God and Christianity for the war, but they need not go far to find the real cause of the war, when they understand that Mammon has been substituted for God and materialism for Christianity.

What is sorely needed today is a returning to God and a reaffirmation of the Bible as a revelation from God. This is the only true foundation for a permanent peace.

Sharps, Va.

### THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER.

By Rev. W. I. Sinnott.

Two questions may be asked in regard to the proposed amendment to Paragraph 235 of the Book of Church Order, namely: (1) Are its merits sufficient to warrant its adoption? (2) And has the prescribed form for amendments to the Constitution been exactly complied with?

1. Every genuine Presbyterian church in which there are children has at least two rolls of members, Paragraph 70, one of those admitted to the Lord's table with the right of voting in congregational meetings, if in good and regular standing—communicants—presumably regenerate; and another roll of non-communicating members, that is, of baptized children—presumably unregenerate until they confess their faith in Christ. To this latter roll may be transferred communicants who confess unregeneration and satisfy the session that this confession is true.

In the proposed law it is not clear whether the act of the session in making the proposed transfer is an act of the Church rectifying a mistake, or a penal judgment for non-performance of duty; if the former, is it not hazardous for the Church to pronounce a person not born of God who still confesses Jesus as the Christ? 1 John 5:1. If the latter, it is making the part of the fold where abide the lambs of Christ's flock a penal colony in the kingdom—the penitentiary where those who under

the present law are guilty of an offense, and are therefore religious criminals, are confined.

Furthermore, what is accomplished by this transfer? These religious criminals, though, still members of the Presbyterian Church, will lose the privilege of being reported as Presbyterians in the statistics, since the Church years ago decided not to include baptized non-communicants in the statistical reports, although last year there was room in the Assembly's minutes for fourteen reports on what Scripture calls filthy lucre; they lose the privilege of voting in congregational meetings and of partaking of the Lord's Supper—privileges which they treat with indifference, if not contempt—but under the liberal invitation of the Episcopal and of the Methodist churches, such Presbyterians, though excluded from the Lord's table in their own church, can commune in these other churches, provided they truly and earnestly repent of their sins and are in love and charity with their neighbors, etc.

2. Paragraph 142 of the Book of Church Order implies that the language be given of the amendment recommended, and that a majority of the Presbyteries advise and consent to it, yet the Presbyteries would have been ignorant of the language of the proposed law had it not been for the thoughtfulness of the General Assembly's efficient clerk, Dr. H. T. Law, who recovered this amendment from the archives or waste-basket and sent it to the Presbyteries. Careless legislation!

A few instances of carelessness in law-making may now be given:

1. In 1912 the Assembly recommended an ungrammatical amendment to Paragraph 134. This law, after its enactment, appears in the Book of 1914 with three unauthorized, illegal verbal changes.

It is said that once in writing a treaty agreed on between two nations, one misspelled word cheated one of the nations out of a large section of territory; a change in punctuation once converted an apology for an insult into a repetition of the insult; a change in the punctuation of 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 and of Eph. 1:4, 5, approved by eminent scholars, throws considerable light on the doctrines taught by these verses.

2. As late as 1892 the law in Paragraph 63 was that if a session had as many as two ruling elders, both were necessary to constitute a quorum, but if there were no more than two ruling elders one with the pastor was a quorum. The Digest tells us (page 73) that it was in answer to the "prayer" of W. I. Sinnott that this law was made intelligible.

3. Why ruling elders and deacons must study the peace, unity, edification and purity of the Church, probationers' (licentiates) peace, unity and purity, but not edification, and ordained ministers, only the purity and peace of the Church, can best be explained as careless legislation.

Careless legislation is associated with lax construction of law. One instance will be given:

In 1909 a Presbytery, after due warning that it was contemplating violating the law, endorsed a proposed State law which was not "the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures" required by Paragraph 17 of the Book of Church Order, and the act was declarative jurisdiction in civil affairs forbidden in Paragraphs 59, 60. This act was the act of the whole Church until annulled by a higher court, Paragraphs 62 and 270. Through a complaint the Synod was asked to review said decision and annul it unless it was constitutional and

for the edification of the Church, Paragraphs 238, 270, 241. The General Assembly to which the complaint was referred treated the matter as a judicial case, though a lower court can be put on trial only when the higher court prefers the charges, Paragraph 245, and changed the act complained of by striking out a part of it and thus suppressing a portion of the legal evidence and substituting for the part stricken out a preface manufactured out of illegal testimony, forbidden in Paragraph 189, and containing two statements which were not true, and then virtually justified the Presbytery for violating the law, but condemned the action, spirit and language of the complainant, although his action and spirit were loyalty to a vital principle of Southern Presbyterianism, and a part of the language condemned was from the Confession of Faith and the Book of Church Order. As an aftermath the Synod refused to review the minutes of the Presbytery during the twelve months this matter was before it, threw them away, and after a wrangle over the matter adjourned in a manner that would have been discreditable had the Church court been only a political society, instead of the temple of the Holy Spirit and the body of Christ. A Phryic victory for the Presbytery truly!

The Church then will do well to think twice before adopting a law that brings further discredit on the lambs of Christ and that is proposed in a careless, irregular way.

Salters Depot, S. C.

### THE DIVINE ADMINISTRATION OF REWARDS.

By Rev. William H. Bates, D. D.

Our Lord spake two parables, in both of which a trust is committed, an accounting is required, and rewards are rendered.

The mechanism of the two parables is thus the same, but as to morals serious question has been raised. The principles on which the awards are made seem to present a difficulty that calls for adjustment, and the solution of the problem involved has been greatly desired.

The earlier of the two parables is the Parable of the Pounds, Luke 19:12-27; the later, uttered only three days before his death, is the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30.

In the first, a nobleman going "into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return," calls his ten servants and delivers unto each a pound, with the direction, "Occupy (Rev. trade ye herewith) till I come." No discrimination is made: each receives his pound. In the second discrimination is made, each one receiving "according to his several ability": one five talents, another two, and another one. (A talent is about \$1,800.)

In due time an accounting is called for and awards are made. What are the administrative principles entering into the transaction? A disclosure of these may help to, if not completely, solve the difficulty.

A discerning scrutiny will discover, as doubtless upon reflection all will agree, that the point upon which the Parable of the Pounds turns, is that of Administrative Efficiency.

The first one to render account says: "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." He is commended and rewarded: "Have thou authority over ten cities." The second: "Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds." A commensurate reward is given to him: "Be thou also over five cities." The third!—well, he is a slacker, an impudent and insolent slacker at that; and he gets what is coming to him (vs. 20-24). And the order is: "Take from him